

**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. At the time of the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-16 were pending. Claims 17 and 18 have been added, and claim 1 has been amended. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. Claims 1-18 are now pending for further consideration on the merits.

**Prior Art Rejections:**

Claims 1-7 and 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0219127 to Russ et al. (hereinafter “Russ”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,502,191 to Smith. Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Russ in view of Smith and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,813,264 to Vassilovski. These rejections are traversed for at least the reasons given below.

Independent claim 1 now includes the features of claim 5, in which the agency communication section has a virtual slave unit having the function of the slave unit and a function of converting voice and data formats to go beyond the firewall, and said virtual slave unit executes communications by agency.

The Office Action asserts that paragraph 0037 and 0116 of Russ teach the above features, but Applicant respectfully disagrees. Namely, paragraph 0037 of Russ describes that a DSCT 110 provides a two-way interface between a DBDS 100 and the subscriber, whereby the DSCT 110 decodes and further processes signals for display on a display device. This portion of Russ says nothing about the DSCT 110 having a virtual slave unit that converts voice and data formats to go beyond a firewall, as now recited in claim 1. Rather, the DSCT 110 of Russ merely decodes and processes signals for display, without utilizing any virtual slave unit. Note that that the display is provided within the firewall and thus is not beyond the firewall, as clearly shown by way of the TV 112 being inside the firewall in Figure 1 of Russ et al.

Paragraph 0116 of Russ describes that an entitlement message 800 includes an address field 802, message content 804 and an authentication token 806, whereby the EMM 800 is used for securely transmitting information between a headend 102 and the DSCT 110, between the headend 102 and the client-receiver 122, and between the DSCT 110 and the client-receiver 122, and whereby the EMM 800 is a secure message. This portion of Russ says nothing about the DSCT 110 having a virtual slave unit that converts voice and data formats to go beyond a firewall, as now recited in claim 1. Note that the DSCT 110 does not provide information to the headend 102, but rather it receives video from the headend 102, and thus it does not convert any video data to go beyond the firewall.

Accordingly, presently pending independent claim 1 is patentable over the combined teachings of Russ and Smith, since Smith does not rectify the above-mentioned deficiencies of Russ.

**New Claims:**

New claims 17 and 18 have been added to recite additional features of the present invention that are believed to provide an additional basis of patentability for those claims, beyond the reasons given above for their base claim.

**Conclusion:**

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for

such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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